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TRANSLATION

Number 966

23 August 1966

SELECTED TRANSLATIONS FROM "VOYENNAYA MYSL'."

No 1, January 1966

OFFICE OF CENTRAL REFERENCE  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Voyennaya Mysl' (Military Thought) is a monthly organ of the USSR Ministry of Defense, printed by the ministry's Military Publishing House, Moscow. The articles translated below are from Issue No 1, January 1966 which was signed for the press 25 December 1965.

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IN SOVIET MILITARY SCIENCE AND PRACTICE

by Maj-Gen N. Sushko and Capt 2d Rand V. Puzik

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Vladimir Il'ich Lenin emphasized repeatedly that gnoseological (theory-of-knowledge) problems of the development of science were becoming extremely urgent because of the very needs of the development of concrete sciences, because of the necessity to deepen and expand research on the problems which had arisen for science. This principle applies to any specific field of scientific knowledge, including Soviet military science. Problems of the theory of knowledge are of specially great importance for our military science for the following main reasons.

First, the modern revolution in the military field has caused qualitative changes in the former principles of the general theory of the art of war and of the doctrine of forms and methods of waging war. Many concepts and categories of military science have been subjected to radical change; some are gradually dying out, as obsolete; others which, in the course of development of military theory, reflect modern military practice, are being filled out with new content. A process is going on of forming new concepts and categories which reflect the essential traits of the qualitative transformations brought about by the revolution in the military field. These processes, taking place in Soviet military science, require deep scientific analysis from positions of the Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge.

Second, the revolution in the military field has brought about a new stage in the scientific understanding of the principles governing the course and outcome of modern war. The complicated internal relations of armed conflict with the use of nuclear missiles and other means of mass destruction have brought into being new special methods of research. Today more and more military theorists and practitioners are using mathematical methods of analysis and generalization of empirical data, and cybernetic devices for scientific predictions and working out optimum solutions in the development of models of weapons and combat equipment and in conducting military operations. There is ever wider use of various deductive methods of arriving, from some general principles and rules of military practice, at private theoretical positions and concrete recommendations in regulations as to leadership and command of armed conflict. In this connection, gnoseological analysis of new methods of military-scientific research, their cognitive possibilities, and study of the interrelations of these methods with dialectical-materialistic theories of knowledge assume special importance.

Third, the revolution in the military field has caused qualitative changes in the nature of combat activities and the combat training of troops. These changes have complicated combat practice and have increased the role of scientifically-based guidance of the whole life and the combat activities of troops. Hence the objective requirement to improve the philosophical training of command personnel as an essential prerequisite to creative direction of troops in their every-day activities and in the course of combat actions.

Consequently, military practice and the interests of further development of Soviet military theory confront military specialists and philosophers with many concrete problems which can only be solved on the basis of study of the principles and requirements of Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge.

The principles and requirements of dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge

Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge is the doctrine of the source of any scientific knowledge, of the acquisition of knowledge of the objective world as a dialectical process of reflecting the material world in the consciousness of people in concepts, categories, laws and theories of science, of the ways of attaining objective truths, and of the role of practice as the basis of cognition and the criterion of truth.

In creating the dialectical materialistic theory of knowledge, Marx, Engels and Lenin proceeded from the very important principle of the theory of reflection, that the consciousness of man is the highest form of reflection of the objective world. This theory of knowledge is the application of the principles of the dialectical materialistic theory of reflection to the process of cognition of the world by man. The organic interrelation of the theory of knowledge and the theory of reflection constitutes the immeasurable superiority of Marxist-Leninist gnoseology over all pre-Marxist, and modern bourgeois, gnoseology.

The dialectical materialistic theory of knowledge has a universal character, because it provides a general doctrine of the laws and principles of scientific knowledge of the world. Specific sciences do not have any special theories of knowledge. Theoretically generalizing the experience of specific sciences in the acquisition of knowledge of the objective world, dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge reveals and formulates the general laws of cognition; it formulates the general principles and requirements for scientific acquisition of knowledge, which serve as methodology for constructing theory in each science and the scientific basis for the activities of people in the revolutionary re-making of society. And it is because dialectical

dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge fulfills the function of a single theory of scientific knowledge that its principles and demands should be applied in any field of scientific research, and also in practical activities; "...in their practice people are guided completely and exclusively by the materialistic theory of knowledge." (Lenin, Complete Collected Works, Vol. 18, p. 143).

Let us examine the basic principles of Marxist-Leninist gnoseology in the acquisition of knowledge of armed conflict.

Unity of the empirical and the logical. The experience of military science in the scientific acquisition of knowledge, and all military practice and its basis and goal, show that any study of armed conflict begins with the accumulation of factual material. Observing the activities of units of various sizes in various training and combat situations, the military researcher collects empirical data. For this purpose he makes use of experimental methods in the form of proving-ground trials and various experimental exercises and maneuvers, and also of the method of statistical observation, enabling him to systematize the selection of facts. But study of armed conflict is not limited to the accumulation of empirical data. It should go on to abstract theoretical generalization of the empirical data. By special scientific methods the military researcher proceeds from knowledge of the phenomena of armed conflict and understanding of its essentials to the discovery of cause-and-effect relationships, to the discovery of the laws of armed conflict. The theoretical generalizations tested in practice are incorporated in regulations and manuals on the conduct of military operations and in methods of making calculations for the application of weapons and equipment in combat.

The movement of the acquisition of knowledge from the accumulation of empirical information to abstract thought, to theoretical generalization, is inherent in the process of cognition in any field of objective reality. It is one of the most important laws of knowledge. It shows that empirical knowledge and abstract thinking are two different levels of knowledge, a lower and a higher. Empirical knowledge gives us knowledge of the phenomena, and logical thinking, knowledge of the essences, the hidden principles which govern the phenomena of the objective world.

Based on this law, dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge has formulated one of the initial gnoseological principle without which it is impossible correctly to understand the whole succeeding process of knowledge in any specific field--the principle of the unity of empirical knowledge and logical thought. This basic principle of the Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge teaches our military cadres to approach dialectically the very process of acquiring knowledge of armed conflict, to apply flexibly various methods of study of empirical information and of theoretical development of it, and also methods of practical testing of the truth of theoretical principles of military science.

The principle of the unity of theory and practice. Theoretical knowledge, the highest level of scientific knowledge, is not an end in itself. Soviet military science formulates various theories (in which are expressed the relations, conforming to laws, of the phenomena and processes of armed conflict) in order to utilize knowledge of these principles for the attainment of victory. Such relationship of theory and practice exists in all fields of knowledge and practical activity of people. Man acquires an understanding of the laws of nature and society in order, in his practical activity, to transform nature and make revolutionary changes in social life.

Proceeding from this, Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge formulates the principle of the unity of theory and practice. Applied to Soviet military science and modern military practice, this principle means that military theory is based on military practice, originates from it, and is given life, corrected, and tested in the course of training and combat activities of troops. In its turn, modern military practice is guided by scientific military theory.

The unity of theory and practice is a dialectical unity in which practice has the leading role, by virtue of the fact that it is the basis and the purpose of theoretical understanding of the objective world, and is the only objective criterion of the truth of scientific theories. The principle of the unity of theory and practice should be approached creatively, with consideration of the specific characteristics and conditions of the circumstances in which certain problems are being solved. This means that any belittling or exaggeration of the importance of theory will inevitably lead to a break between practice and theory, to a loss of the scientific theoretical bases for practical activity, and to "practicalism" and subjectivism in the activities of our cadres. Under-evaluation of theory and over-evaluation of practice is the gnoseological root of subjectivistic and arbitrary decisions which do not have sufficient scientific theoretical foundation. A creative approach to the unity of theory and practice means also that in certain stages of the development of scientific knowledge and practice, the importance of theory may increase, and it may become of primary importance. It has just such importance in the present-day situation of Soviet military science. The deep and all-round development of military science, the mastery of military theory by all officer personnel, is one of the conditions for the high combat-capability of the Soviet armed forces, and their readiness at any time to meet any aggressor with crushing resistance.

The principle of the concreteness of truth. Proceeding from the very important position of philosophical materialism as to the possibility of knowing the real world, Marxist-Leninist gnoseology considers the main goal of knowledge to be the attainment of truth, that is, a true reflection of objective reality in human ideas, and in scientific theories of the laws of its development. Then, and only then, can social practice be

guided by theory. In modern war, armed forces which are guided by military doctrine and principles of the art of war which do not reflect the objective conformity to natural laws (zakonomernosti) of armed conflict cannot gain the victory (other things being equal) over an enemy whose action are based on doctrine and theory which reflect the objective truth of armed conflict.

Dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge teaches that comprehension of objective truth is a long process, in the course of which man goes from the subjective idea "to objective truth through 'practice' (and techniques /tekhnika/)" (V. I. Lenin, Complete Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 183). It is for this reason that Marxist-Leninist gnoseology demands a concrete approach to scientific knowledge. There is no abstract truth; truth is always concrete (Lenin, op. cit., Vol. 8, p. 400). For Soviet military science, concreteness of truth means that cognition (posnaniye) can adequately reflect military reality only if it takes the object of cognition -- armed conflict -- in concrete historical circumstances of time and place. What was objectively true in the principles and rules of the Soviet art of war of the period of World War II cannot be completely and unconditionally accepted for the practical operations of our troops in war today. Nuclear weapons and rockets have brought forth new laws of armed conflict. Concrete analysis of the experience of past wars is necessary, to make possible fruitful use of that experience under modern conditions.

Lenin saw concrete analysis of the concrete situation as the very essence of Marxism, as its vital dialectical soul. He developed this gnoseological principle further in the following words: "The whole soul of Marxism, its whole system, demands that every thesis be examined only (a) historically, (b) only in relation to others, and (c) only in relation to the concrete experience of history" (Op. cit., vol. 49, p. 329). Such are the basis principles of the theory of knowledge of dialectical materialism. Lenin points out that along with these principles, of great importance also are the so-called elements of the dialectic, which confront any scientific knowledge with a number of fundamental (printsipal'nyye) requirements. Following are the main ones.

The requirement of objectivity of consideration. Objective consideration -- "not examples, not deviations, but the thing itself" (Lenin, op. cit., vol. 29, p. 202) -- thus Lenin formulates the essence of this most important gnoseological principle, which expresses a basic and completely obligatory requirement of any scientific research. It follows from the fact that the subject of knowledge of any science exists objectively. People cannot arbitrarily change the conforming-to-law nature of phenomena and the processes of surrounding reality; they must come to know these laws, and build their activity on the basis of these laws.

The correct relationship between the objective and the subjective is of tremendous importance for military activity. While based on materialistic ideas of the objective nature of the laws of armed conflict, Soviet military science by no means makes a fetish of these laws, but teaches our cadres to utilize them actively for victory over the enemy. This makes it possible successfully to develop the Soviet art of war and to combine organically a comprehensive evaluation of the objectively existing circumstances with decisive actions and dependable provision to the troops of the necessary means of warfare.

The requirement of comprehensiveness of examination. Objective consideration assumes knowledge of phenomena and processes in the concrete conditions of real existence, and especially from the point of view of the multiform relations of a given phenomenon or process with others. Hence we have still another requirement of the Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge -- comprehensiveness of consideration, or examination, of the object of cognition. "The totality of all aspects of a phenomenon, of reality, and their interrelationships--this is what constitutes truth," said Lenin in Philosophical Notebooks (op. cit., vol. 29, p 178).

This requirement is of first importance for Soviet military science and for the practical activity of officers and commanders of all ranks, both in time of peace and of war. Strategy, operations and tactics, obviously, should be developed not just on the basis of personal experience, but on comprehensive generalization of all the combat experience of troops (and also the experience of the combat operations of a probable enemy), on deep study of the laws of armed conflict, and on scientific understanding of the nature of modern military operations. It is necessary, for example, not to judge as to the strength and capabilities of the enemy and the condition of his units from separate items of information and facts, but to do so after having studied all the elements of the combat situation and their interrelations and inter-dependencies. Only then will a well-founded decision for a battle (or an operation) be possible. For the officer called upon to command troops during combat operations, the following statements of Lenin are of urgent importance: "In order really to know an object, it is necessary to encompass and study all its aspects, all its relations, and the 'intermediaries' between it and other objects. We will never achieve this completely, but the requirement of comprehensiveness will guard us against mistakes and against [mental] necrosis" (op. cit., vol. 42, p. 290).

The requirement to study the object of knowledge in its movement and development. Military research, as well as practice, cannot achieve correspondence of thought with reality if it ignores the actually existing uninterrupted development and improvement of military equipment and weapons and the improvement of methods and forms of armed conflict. Ability to see, analyze and consider changes in the circumstances and

possibilities of armed conflict and of military equipment, and in the relative strength of forces, and to draw correct conclusions from them and to provide for wise revision of training and indoctrination of troops -- all this impells command personnel to make original decisions, work out plans independently, introduce into them timely changes in accordance with the changing military situation, and persistently put them into effect. Boldness of thought of the Soviet officer and military commander should be combined with and supplemented by boldness of action.

Observance of this requirement of Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge makes it possible to discover the relation of the present stage of development of military theory and practice to the past and future, to evaluate objectively military experience, to take from it everything valuable and necessary for present-day conditions, and to foresee the future. This helps our military cadres to determine both the immediate tasks and the long-range ones in their work.

Such are the basic principles and requirements of Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge. They are not a subjective construction ofgnose-ological principles and rules, remote from practical scientific knowledge of the world, but express the most general laws of human knowledge. This is why they are scientific theory-of-knowledge principles and requirements, the observance of which is a necessary condition for the attainment of truth.

Some problems of Soviet military science and practice in the light of Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge.

Dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge constitutes thegnose-ological foundation by any science, including Soviet military science. This means that penetrating into the essence of the phenomena of armed conflict is subject to the general laws of scientific knowledge, its principles and requirements. By the application of them, the most varied military fields come to be understood. In the light of dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge, the direction becomes clearer in the solution of military theoretical and practical problems. Let us examine some of them, to show again the vast importance of the theory of knowledge for Soviet military science and practice of today.

The problem of the subject of Soviet military science. It has always been a pressing one. Its solution, because of the revolution in the military field and the unusually complicated nature of the development of the phenomena and processes of military reality, has assumed especially great importance. Therefore the ceaseless discussion is to be expected which is pursuing the goal of accurately defining the subject and content of our military science, of bringing it into correspondence with the deep changes which are taking place in the military field, in

order on this basis to mobilize the military cadres for deep study of new problems of military theory and practice.

What does it mean, from the point of view of the theory of knowledge, to define the subject of a specific science? It means to establish qualitatively a defined sphere of the objective world, the development of which is subject to specific laws, and to make this sphere the objective of cognitive and practical activity of people. Each specific science is a system of knowledge of these laws. Science "in all fields of knowledge," wrote Lenin, "shows us the manifestation of basic laws in the seeming chaos of phenomena" (op. cit., vol. 25, p. 46). And our military science is no exception; it is a system of knowledge of the laws of armed conflict.

The phenomena of war are unusually complex and many-sided. In studying them in their interrelations and interactions, one gets the impression that all these phenomena must be included in the subject of Soviet military science. But such an impression can scarcely be called scientific, because it eclectically mixes together phenomena having specific, qualitatively defined characteristics.

It must be agreed that war and armed conflict are phenomena mutually interpenetrating one another. War is an extension of the politics of certain classes by the use of force. For this very reason it is at the same time armed conflict, that is, the totality of means of force employed by the belligerent sides in the interests of attaining certain class political goals. And at the same time war, in comparison with armed conflict, is a broader and more many-sided phenomenon. Armed conflict does not exhaust the total content of war. During a war armed conflict is always closely interwoven with other forms of conflict -- economic, ideological and diplomatic conflict. And only by combining all of them are class and political goals achieved in modern war. Moreover, when war comes it plunges a society into a special situation, very different from that of peace. This depends, of course, on the scale of the war, depending on which the society becomes more or less military.

It is true that war, and consequently armed conflict, too, depends on politics, and gives rise to and determines politics (or policy). But they cannot be considered as identical on that basis. Armed conflict is the basic attribute of war, its specific feature, its form of functioning, by means of which the warring sides accomplish military, and through them, social and political tasks and achieve certain aims. In armed conflict, as the basic form of war, is manifested the political essence and the class content of war.

While being qualitatively a specific element of war, armed conflict at the same time possesses relative independence. This latter consists in the fact that the processes of development of armed conflict are subject

to the operation of specific laws. Marx, Engels and Lenin indicated  
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the laws of armed conflict, speaking of armed up-  
rising as a form of political struggle.

Consequently, examination of war as a social-historical phenomenon and armed conflict as a form of manifestation of its political essence and class content, shows that these are interrelated by qualitatively different phenomena, each subject to its own laws of development. For war, these are laws of its dependence on the politics of certain classes, laws expressing relationship to the means of production of material goods, to the prevailing production relationships. For armed conflict, these are laws expressing the objective connections and causal relations of the phenomena and processes in combat activities on land and sea and in the air. The two rows of these laws are interconnected, but that they are qualitatively distinct, from the point of view of dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge, must be constantly kept in mind if we desire to define correctly the subject of Soviet military science.

Of what does this subject consist? Soviet military science does not specially study the laws of war a social phenomena. This is the subject of Marxist-Leninist sociology -- historical materialism and some other sciences (for example, political economy, which studies the problems of the effect of economics on wars). Our military science, in working out problems of military theory and in military practice, uses the data of these and other sciences taking into account the great influence on armed conflict of political, economic, geographic, national and other factors, in which the general laws of war are specifically manifested. Its subject is armed conflict, the laws, principles, and rules for carrying it on to victory.

Soviet military science is a system of scientific knowledge of the laws of armed conflict and military affairs (voynnoye delo), knowledge of the conditions and factors which affect the course and results of armed conflict, and of the principles and rules of the art of war, based on understanding of these laws. In essence, it is a theory of the military field in its total scope. Recognition of the laws of armed conflict as the subject of our military science makes possible a certain division of labor among the sciences which study the various aspects of war as a social-political phenomenon. Study of the laws of armed conflict as the basic specific feature of war orients our military cadres to the working out of fundamental problems of armed conflict with the use of nuclear missiles and other means of mass destruction. At the same time it does not exclude the need for Soviet military science to take into account the data of other sciences and to use them in developing its own general theory, military strategy, operational methods, and tactics, and in the theory and organization of combat training and military and political indoctrination of personnel.

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The founders of dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge pointed out that each specific science is not just a system of knowledge about specific laws of the development of the objective world, but is at the same time a doctrine of the methods of study of these laws. Science is a unity of theory and method.

Special methods used for the study and acquisition of knowledge of various aspects of the material world are determined by the specific subject of the science. This is natural. Each object of scientific investigation requires special methods of systematization, analysis, and theoretical generalization of the empirical information. For example, the age of our planet is studied in geology by the method of radioactive decay, and the nature of minerals, by the roentgenometer.

Military science, too, has special methods of research. But inasmuch as it occupies a border position between the natural, technical, and social sciences, some of their methods are also peculiar to it. Thus, military specialists engaged in developing the latest models of weapons and equipment make extensive use of the methods of mathematics, statistics, cybernetics and other sciences.

Of great theoretical and practical importance is the scientific classification of the special methods of investigation of the phenomena of armed conflict, which are one of the important elements of the structure of Soviet military science.

Some authors, in trying to solve this problem, limit the variety of special military scientific methods just to statistical analysis and mathematical prediction. Their classification is arbitrary, failing to take into account the functions and capabilities of special methods in the various stages of military scientific research. This is the result of lack of attention to the theory-of-knowledge problems of the various special methods of acquiring knowledge, and also a lack of understanding of the dialectical character of the process of acquiring knowledge of the objective world in general, and of armed conflict in particular.

However, it is precisely the theory of knowledge which provides a scientific basis for the solution of the problem of classification of the special methods of investigating armed conflict. Any scientific investigation, from the point of view of Marxist-Leninist gnoseology, is carried out in the following order: preparation of the scientific investigation, theoretical investigation, practical test of the results obtained. In this sequence of the knowledge-acquiring process there is concretely manifested the most important gnoseological principle of the scientific acquisition of knowledge -- the principle of the

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unity and interrelationship of the empirical and the theoretical on the basis of practice. "From lively contemplation to abstract thought, and from the latter to practice -- this is the dialectical way to knowledge of truth, to cognition of objective reality" (op. cit., Vol 29, pp 152-153). This principle, reflecting the objective law of any scientific acquisition of knowledge, should be the foundation of classification of all special methods of investigation in Soviet military science. In accordance with this principle all special methods of investigating the phenomena and processes of armed conflict and the military field may be divided into three basic groups: (1) methods of accumulating empirical data, (2) methods of theoretical investigation, and (3) methods of practical testing of the results of investigation. However, these three groups of methods in the concrete acquisition of knowledge of armed conflict are applied in synthesis, in combination, supplementing one another.

The accumulation and primary systematization of factual data is the preparatory stage of military scientific research. Here is where the methods of the first group are used, the methods of accumulation of empirical data: statistical observation, including that of historical experience; laboratory experimentation; proving ground trials; experimental training of troops; etc.

By the second group of methods theoretical investigation is carried out: analysis and generalization of statistical data, development of mathematical models of the processes being studied, etc. At this stage are used the method of probability, the method of statistical analysis and mathematical modeling, methods of the theory of operations research, and linear and non-linear programming.

The results obtained, in the form of static and dynamic principles, generalizations, conclusions, and practical recommendations are then tested by methods constituting the third group. These include the methods of game modelling: command and staff exercises, games on maps and on actual terrain, manipulation of the results of military scientific research on computers, research exercises, etc.

Thus classification based on the principle of movement of the knowledge process from the accumulation of empirical data to theoretical investigation and generalization of the data, and thence to practice as the test of truth, can encompass all the many forms of special methods of investigation of the phenomena and processes of armed conflict and the military field (delo).

The classification shows that some methods of the first and third groups are interrelated and interpenetrating. For example: proving ground trials and troop exercises. In the one case they provide empirical data for military scientific research. In the other, they make

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it possible to make enough progress in military research; to discover new parameters and requirements of the objective; to test theoretical generalizations under conditions most closely approximating those of combat; to make decisions as to further theoretical research or application of the results obtained in the armed forces, and incorporation of the principles developed into military regulations and manuals. The principle of the unity of theory and practice is expressed in the organic interrelationship of the special methods of military scientific research.

What is the relation of special methods of Soviet military science to dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge as a general method of scientific acquisition of knowledge? As we know, at the dawn of the development of our military science, the Trotskyites asserted that to understand military processes it was not necessary to be a Marxist philosopher; it was enough to be a military specialist; they said that Marxist philosophy had nothing to do with the theory of warfare, with the practical leadership of armies. Lenin and his comrades gave a decisive rebuff to this argument against thegnoseological bases of Soviet military science. They convincingly proved the great importance of dialectical materialism and its theory of knowledge for all fields of military science. Hence it follows that the scientific value and effectiveness of the special methods of military scientific research are determined not in themselves, but in dependence on those philosophicalgnoseological principles which are the foundation for their use.

Marxist-Leninistgnoseology is that universal method of acquisition of knowledge in relation to which the special methods of military scientific research are manifested. It does not follow from this, however, that dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge stands above Soviet military science, above its special methods. The latter are individual aspects, elements, of the universal scientific methods of acquisition of knowledge. In other words, thegnoseology of dialectical materialism appears in its concrete form when it is embodied in the practices and methods, specific for Soviet military science, of understanding armed conflict.

Within certain limits the special methods of military scientific research are independent, but at the same time they represent the putting into practice of the principles and requirements of the universal methods of acquisition of knowledge, applied to armed conflict and the military field. For example, the statistical method expresses one of the principles of the theory of knowledge, requiring that the object of study be considered in movement and development, from the point of view of gradual quantitative accumulation and successive qualitative changes. The so-called net (setevoy) method of research, making it possible to encompass a great variety of phenomena and processes in their numerous connections and relations, is an expression

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At the methods of gaming physical, and mathematical modelling there is put into effect one of the procedures of the universal method -- analogy. In experimental methods and trial exercises of troops is manifested the requirement of Marxist-Leninist gnoseology to take into account the interrelations and the causalities of the processes being studied.

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Thus dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge is the foundation of the special methods of military scientific research. The use of these methods is successful when there is strict observance of the principles and requirements of Marxist-Leninist gnoseology, which is an important condition for the development of Soviet military theory and practice.

The problem of truth and its criteria in the theory of the art of war. The use of the special methods and the universal method of scientific knowledge in its dialectical interrelations assures the attainment of truth and adequate reflection of the laws of armed conflict in the principles of military science and practice.

But what is the nature of objective truth, reflected by military theory? According to the assertions of the idealist philosophers, there is no absolute truth, and there can be none. Human knowledge, in their opinion, is always relative, i.e., lacking absolute credibility. Proceeding from such a resolution of the problem of truth, bourgeois military theoreticians are skeptical of the possibility of attaining objectively true, completely reliable knowledge in the process of gaining knowledge of armed conflict.

Clausewitz, too, believed that in the field of knowledge of the phenomena of war one could count on obtaining only probably, and not absolutely, true knowledge, since the very subject of knowledge -- the phenomena of war -- was a field in which chance played a part, and not one of [strict] cause-and-effect relationships, and the operation of law. One cannot fail to see behind all such reasoning the class limitations of the German military theorist and the direct influence of idealism.

Modern bourgeois military philosophical thought has not advanced very far in the solution of the problem of the nature of truth gained in the process of acquiring knowledge of armed conflict. Of course the theoreticians of the West cannot fail to take into account the changes in the military field which are taking place due to the appearance of weapons of mass destruction. In striving to study comprehensively armed conflict involving the use of nuclear missiles and the latest conventional weapons, they are doing a great deal to develop new quantitative and qualitative methods of studying the various kinds of military operations under modern conditions. However, typical of modern bourgeois military theoretical thought is a clearly expressed agnosticism, a denial of general, repetitive, persistent and essential connections and relations in the phenomena

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and processes of armed conflict, i. e., a denial of the operation of laws governing the course and outcome of armed conflict. Thus, in the book of F. Mikhe, Atomic Weapons and Armies (Izdatel'stvo inostrannoy literatury, 1965, p. 33), we find the thought that half of the strategic and tactical principles of warfare are not subject to operation of laws and therefore cannot be known (poznana). "These factors which cannot be calculated," writes Mikhe, "can be known only intuitively, with much depending on chance, luck, initiative, and improved organization."

In denying the subject-to-laws nature of armed conflict, and asserting the dominance in it of chance, modern bourgeois military philosophical thought arrives at a denial of theoretical knowledge of military phenomena. This is evidence that the problem of truth continues to be the key point where modern idealistic gnoseology is closest to bourgeois military science.

Soviet military science has as its methodological base the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism -- dialectical materialism. Resting on the principle of the Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge of the possibility of establishing objective truth and thus gaining reliable knowledge, our science believes that the phenomena and processes of armed conflict can be known, since they are subject to the operation of certain laws. The establishment of absolute truth in knowledge of the laws of armed conflict and a comprehensive reflection of them in theory of warfare, in other fields of military knowledge, and in regulations and manuals -- this constitutes the main goal of Soviet military science.

However, as Marxist-Leninist gnoseology asserts, the attainment of absolute truth is a process; that is, correspondence of knowledge with objective reality is achieved in the course of the development of human knowledge from the sum total of relative truths. "Each step in the development of science adds new kernels to this total of absolute truth, but the limits of truth of each scientific thesis is relative, sometimes being expanded, sometimes contracted, by the further growth of knowledge," wrote Lenin (op. cit., Vol. 18, p. 137).

From this thesis it follows, first, that in the theory of military science is expressed relative truth, which at each stage of development of military science is limited by the level of development of that science, by social conditions of the life of the people, and by the level of scientific and technical progress. Second, at each stage of scientific knowledge of armed conflict, relative truth, expressed by military theory, contains kernels of absolute truth. This is why military theory and the principles and rules of the art of war, incorporated in regulations and manuals, serve as the scientific basis of successful conduct of combat operations. And third, from this it follows that our art of war should continuously develop, being constantly enriched by new principles and rules. Our military regulations should constantly improve, being continuously replenished with new and more exact regulations which regulate on

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The test of the truth of any scientific theory is practice. "The question of whether human thought can arrive at objective truth," wrote Karl Marx, is not at all a matter of theory, but a practical matter. Man should demonstrate in practice the truth, i. e., the reality, the power, the comprehensiveness (posyustozhnost') of his thinking (K. Marx and F. Engels, Collected Works, vol. 3, p. 1). And man, as Lenin said does prove in his practical activity the objective correctness of his ideas, concepts, and laws of science, and the correspondence of his conceptions with the nature of the things which he perceives.

What should we understand by practice as the test of the truth of military theory and the principles of the art of war? In our military philosophical literature one encounters statements that the only objective test of the truth of any doctrine, and of military theory, is war. One cannot agree with this. War is a practical determiner of the value both of military theory as a whole and of individual principles of warfare. But it would be incorrect to consider war as the only form of military practice. Why, if one were to follow the logic to the end, then, on the basis of the statement about war as the only objective test of truth, one would have to come to the conclusion that in modern military theory, which underlies the characteristics of armed conflict with the use of nuclear missiles, there is not a grain of absolute truth.

Military practice, which is the test of the truth of military theory, is not just battles and engagements. It is also combat training of troops in peace time -- exercises, maneuvers, marches. "In time of peace," says R. Ya. Malinovskiy, "there exists the only possibility of testing theoretical conclusions in conditions most closely approximating a battle situation: exercises and maneuvers, combat firing and launching of missiles, field marches and sea cruises. The utilization of this opportunity is one of the ways of enriching military science with practical experience and of strengthening the theoretical bases of practice." (Bditel'no stoyat na strazhe mira [Stand Vigilantly on Guard of Peace], Voenizdat, 1962, p. 54)

Military practice, as a part of the social practice of people, is the totality of material activity directed toward support of the high combat readiness of the armed forces and toward successful accomplishment by them of assigned combat tasks in the course of military training and military operations. Military practice consists, consequently, not only of combat operations, but also of the practical military activities of people in peace-time conditions, including various military experiments carried out for the sake of gathering empirical information and improving military theory. All these different forms of military practice also constitute objective tests of truth, and hence are also forms of testing the truth of individual principles of the art of war, and of all military theory.

Approved For Release 2000/08/09 : CIA-RDP85T00875R000300090023-1

in order to test the correctness of military theory, truth to a certain degree can be tested by an intermediate logical means. "If our premises are true," wrote Engels, "and if we correctly apply to them the laws of thought, then the results should be in accord with reality." (K. Marx and F. Engels, Collected Works, vol. 20, p. 269). This means that if during theoretical generalization, military research has observed the principles and requirements of the materialistic theory of knowledge and the laws and rules of logic, objective truth should be reflected to the highest degree in the theoretical theses.

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We have considered only some of what in our opinion are the most important military theoretical problems in the light of Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge. This, of course, does not exhaust the range of problems of military science and practice which could successfully be solved with the help of dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge. Among them, for example, is the problem of developing a logical system of Soviet military science as the totality of scientific categories, laws and principles, and theory and method of investigating armed conflict. Of great importance are problems of the dialectics of the development of the basic concepts and categories of military science in the modern stage of its development, and an analysis of the knowledge-acquisition functions of various special methods of military scientific research.

Thus dialectical materialism's theory of knowledge is thegnoseological foundation of Soviet military science and practice. It equips our cadres with a method of scientific foresight in military matters, shows not only the goal of knowledge of the laws of armed conflict, but also the means of attaining that goal, and also points out the way to use known laws during armed conflict for the defeat of the enemy. The Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge arms our military cadres with the dialectical method of thinking, which has to do with subjectivism, one-sided absolutism in the knowledge and practice of the military art, and dogmatism in decisions and the methods of putting them into effect.

This is why systematic attention should be paid, in the education of officer personnel, to these problems, along with other philosophical problems of military theory and practice. Here are many important problems which are of interest to a wide range of military specialists -- researchers and practical workers.